

Message Text

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ORIGIN NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 IO-12 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-09 H-02

INR-09 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-14

USIA-12 SR-02 ORM-03 /119 R

DRAFTED BY NEA/ ARN: DAKORN: JFC

22670 3/27/73

APPROVED BY NEA - MR. ATHERTON

NEA/ IAI - MR. STACKHOUSE

EUR/ EE - MR. KAISER

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TO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

INFO AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 056698

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, SREF, IZ, US

SUBJECT: IMPRISONED IRAQI JEWS

1. DURING CALL ON NEA DEPUTY ASST. SECRETARY ATHERTON MARCH 26, ISRAELI CHARGE IDAN REQUESTED USG ASK PRESIDENT TITO USE HIS GOOD OFFICES WITH IRAQ TO SEEK INFORMATION REGARDING AND RELEASE OF JEWS IMPRISONED THERE SINCE SEPTEMBER LAST YEAR, AS WELL AS IRAQI DECISION PERMIT THOSE JEWS WISHING EMIGRATE TO DO SO.

2. FOR YOUR BACKGROUND, EIGHT JEWS WERE REPORTED TO HAVE BEEN ARRESTED IN BAGHDAD IN SEPTEMBER 1972 AND APPARENTLY AT LEAST FOUR MORE HAVE BEEN ARRESTED SINCE THEN. NAMES OF PERSONS ARRESTED, ACCORDING TO BEST AVAILABLE INFORMATION ARE: AZOURI SHAMASH, YAACOV ABDOUL AZIZ, YAACOV REJWAN, SHAUL REJWAN, EZRA ABU DAUD, DR. EZRA AZAM, SELIM SADKA, NAJI SITIAT, SHAUL SHAMASH, EZRA SHEMTOV, NAJI KASHKUSH AND SUAD KASHKUSH. SEVERAL HAVE RELATIVES
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IN THE U. S. ARRESTEES WERE REPORTEDLY TAKEN TO STATE SECURITY PRISONS, AND THEY HAVE NOT BEEN HEARD FROM SINCE. IRAQI AUTHORITIES HAVE ALTERNATELY DENIED HAVING ARRESTED ANY JEWS, CLAIMED THAT PERSONS ALLEGEDLY ARRESTED HAD IN FACT FLED COUNTRY CLANDESTINELY, AND STATED THAT NOBODY HAS BEEN ARRESTED IN IRAQ FOR REASONS OF RELIGION (IMPLYING THAT ARRESTS INDEED DID OCCUR). FROM INFORMATION

AVAILABLE TO US, THERE APPEARS TO BE REASON TO FEAR THAT SOME OF THOSE ARRESTED MAY HAVE DIED IN PRISON AND THAT IRAQI GOVERNMENT DOES NOT WANT TO OWN UP TO THIS. SINCE OCTOBER OF LAST YEAR WHEN DEPARTMENT WAS FIRST INFORMED OF ARRESTS WE HAVE ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS ASKED WESTERN EUROPEAN AND OTHER FRIENDLY COUNTRIES WHICH HAVE DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH IRAQ TO INTERCEDE IN BAGHDAD, ON HUMANITARIAN GROUNDS, TO SEEK RELEASE OF ARRESTED JEWS. SEVERAL GOVERNMENTS HAVE ACCEDED TO OUR REQUESTS, BUT SO FAR IRAQIS HAVE, AS INDICATED ABOVE, SIDESTEPED ISSUE OR SIMPLY DENIED ARRESTS.

3. WHILE WE ARE NOT AWARE OF PRECISE PRESENT STATE OF YUGOSLAV- IRAQI RELATIONS, BELIEVE TITO' S CREDENTIALS AS NON- ALIGNED LEADER AND FRIEND OF ARABS AND OTHER THIRD WORLD PEOPLES WOULD CARRY CONSIDERABLY MORE WEIGHT WITH IRAQI GOVERNMENT ON THIS MATTER THAN ANY OTHER REPRESENTATIONS MADE SO FAR. ACCORDINGLY, UNLESS YOU PERCEIVE STRONG OBJECTION, YOU SHOULD RAISE PROBLEM OF IRAQI JEWS WITH GOY AT SUITABLY HIGH LEVEL AND REQUEST PRESIDENT TITO INTERCEDE WITH PRESIDENT BAQR OF IRAQ TO SEEK INFORMATION ON AND RELEASE OF IMPRISONED JEWS AND RIGHT OF EMIGRATION FOR THOSE WHO WISH TO LEAVE, AS WELL AS FOR OTHER MEMBERS OF JEWISH COMMUNITY IN IRAQ. YOU MAY DRAW AS APPROPRIATE ON BACKGROUND PARA TWO ABOVE AND SHOULD MAKE CLEAR USG IS MAKING THIS REQUEST SOLELY ON HUMANITARIAN GROUNDS AND HAS NO WISH TO INTERFERE IN ANY WAY IN RELATIONS BETWEEN YUGOSLAVIA AND IRAQ. ROGERS

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*** Current Handling Restrictions *** n/a

*** Current Classification *** CONFIDENTIAL

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts:
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 28 MAR 1973
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: morefirh
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973STATE056698
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: DAKORN: JFC
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GDS
Errors: n/a
Film Number: n/a
From: SECSTATE WASHDC
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t19730343/aaaaimpv.tel
Line Count: 104
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ORIGIN NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: morefirh
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 03 OCT 2001
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <03-Oct-2001 by smithjr>; APPROVED <15-Oct-2001 by morefirh>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: <DBA CORRECTED> jms 980112
Subject: IMPRISONED IRAQI JEWS
TAGS: PFOR, SREF, IZ, US
To: BELGRADE
TEL AVIV
USUN NEW YORK
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005